THE INVASION OF AMERICA

BY JULIUS W. MULLER

A Narrative Fact Story Based Authoritatively on the Inexorable Mathematics of War—What Can Be Done to Oppose an Invading Army With Our Actual Present Resources In Regulars, Trained Militia, Untrained Citizens, Coast Defenses, Field Artillery, and All Other Weapons of Defense.

(Continued.)

He held in his grip the sea, the land and the air. Inshore lay ships ready to sweep part of his front with protective fire. On land his advance forces had seized roads and railroads, his engineers were repairing what had been destroyed, and his cavalry was guarding all approaches. His air men, overwhelmingly numerous, spied on the American army almost with impunity and parried with sure aerial thrusts all American attempts to spy on their own lines.

The aerial guard, steel breasted, with the wings of speed and talons of fire, could be broken only by equal numbers equally terrible. Individual daring, individual skill were nothing against this armored brood. Five times American fliers rose to try it, and five times they were grappled in midair and torn with shot and dropped to the earth far below. "No more!" said the general in command.

He sat with his chin in his hand studying the dispatches that were laid before him. They were piled high, though twenty operators and half a dozen aids struggled to eliminate from the torrential confusion the news that might be deemed most reliable.

There were messages from Washington, messages from coast defenses, messages from patrols and outposts, from scouts and from company commanders. There were wild reports of enemy invasion from places so far inland that it was palpable that they could not be true. There were reports from places so near by that they might mean imminent danger.

Excited officials of towns and cities sent long involved dispatches or hung for long minutes to telephones to recount interminable tales.

One hundred thousand men had landed, according to spies who had made their way into Fort Greble in the Narragansett defenses. It was 200,000, telephoned Providence, transmitting messages from the coast. The army's own scouts and spies and patrols, groping in insufficient numbers and finding a wall of cavalry and foot and machine gun detachments opposed to them everywhere, sent in estimates that varied all the way from 25,000 to 80,000.

These American advance detachments were striking the enemy outposts east and west. Near Watch Hill three American motorcycle companies with machine guns ambushed and cut up two troops of cavalry. American cavalry drove back a battalion of engineers who had begun work on the railroad at Kingston. At Niantic two American motor patrols ran into the fire of a concealed field gun and were destroyed.

From Fort Michie, on Gull island, came the news, brought by a Montauk point fisherman who had managed to make his way across the sound in a small boat, that men had landed on that end of Long Island. They had destroyed all communication immediately and had seized the railroad leading to New York, but it was impossible to guess how great this force was.

Only one certain fact was developed from all the news. It was that the transports were unloading troops still.

Suddenly, almost simultaneously, the American patrols were driven back all along the line. On a front that extended quickly, irresistibly, clear across Washington county, R. I., from east to west, the invader army expanded. It seized Watch Hill. Kingston was occupied in force. Wickford Junction was occupied. Narragansett Pier was flooded all at once with men and guns.

With the swiftness of a blow from a fighter's fist the invader had struck and won the entire railroad system of the New York, New Haven and Hartford railroad in Rhode Island and commanded the way to Providence.

The foe had filled his divisions. Forty thousand men were ready for battle on American soil, with 10,000 in reserve on the coast.

Now the wind turned southeast. Point Judith, Rhode Island's cape that coastwise mariners call the Fog Hole, began to brew one of its April fogs, gray and blind and wet.

Its first effect was kind to the Americans. The enemy air craft, seeing the vapory bank growing from the sea, fled toward their lines. From all directions they came in like gulls fleeing before a storm. They could not dare to remain in strange territory. All their fine maps, all their ingenious instruments, would be impotent against it. They came in and alighted behind their army.

Freed from them and masked by the fog, the American scouts went forward again and groped once more along the foe's front. In an hour field telephones and telegraphs and aerial told the American commander enough to assure him that the enemy's force in men was at least nearly equal to his own. He knew, too, that the invader had brought up preponderating artillery. Every road, every piece of negotiable country, was held by guns.

The American army held tight. In its front, between it and the foe, there was not a rail line, not a bridge. All had been destroyed. Behind it lay a perfect railroad system, with long trains and giant locomotives under steam and all the gathered motor vehicles ready to speed.

So far the fog was kind to the defenders. But the invader, too, was quick to seize its favor.

Long before half a dozen men, dressed like fishermen, had made their way out of Narragansett harbor in a small sloop and had reported at the enemy headquarters. For a month or more past they had been fishing for lobsters. But they had caught more than lobsters. Their catch lay on the table in the commander's tent in the form of charts, with soundings and range lines in distances. They were maps of the mine fields.

As soon as the fog began these men went aboard a mine sweeper. It steamed eastward, followed by the others. The sweepers had more than the cables and grapples that make a mine sweeper's outfit. Set in rows on the after deck of each vessel were bulging mines, filled with 300 pounds of trinitrotol. [Trinitrotol, now being used in Europe, largely for under water work, is one of the most violently acting explosives known today.]

The fog became so thick that it was hard to say if it were daylight still or night. Night could only make it more black. It could not increase the obscurity.

In the coast defenses of Long Island sound and Narragansett bay every man was straining eyes and ears and nerves. Every gun company was at its weapon. Every gun was loaded. Tall projectiles stood ready, with the chains and grapples of the hoists prepared. Men stood waiting in the powder magazines under the batteries.

Nothing to see or hear at Fort Wright, on Fisher's island. Nothing at Fort Michie, on Gull island. Nothing at Fort Terry, on Plum island. On all the shrouded, swift tideways that led into Long Island sound there was nothing.

There was nothing in front of the Narragansett defenses that eyes could see or ears could hear. Nothing—and then, far out, it was as if a sea monster had arisen in dying torment and lashed and spouted and screamed. Before the riven column of water could fall there came muffled, thundering explosions under the water—one, two, three!

The defenses split the fog with fire. Their mine protecting batteries had been trained over the fields long since. There was no need for aim. Instantly they swept the hidden sea with shells that would clear twenty acres of water.

Again there was silence and blindness—the unearthly silence of the Atlantic sea fog. It lay for half an hour, as if there were no such thing as war in the world.

Then once more came the roar and the crash, followed by its submarine echoes. Once more the land guns raved, firing blind.

The enemy was countermining. Instead of sweeping, his vessels were dropping mines of their own in the fields, and then, backing off to avoid the fire from the batteries if they could, they exploded them by electric contact to blow up the American mines with the shock.

Not all the mine sweepers escaped mines or guns. But there were vessels to spare and lives to spare. All night the countermining went on, and all night the guns fired into the vapor and the darkness.

The sun arose invisibly. But it climbed, and when it had lifted all its disk above the rim of sea it showed through the mist as a pale illumination. It was "burning off" the fog.

"It will be clear enough in an hour," said the executive officer of a battleship under Block island. The vessel's wireless began to speak.

On one of the mother ships men brought out and assembled an armored biplane. Its two fliers stowed range finding apparatus, aerial telegraph, aneroids and charts in it. There were signal flags and light, brightly silvered balls. Men brought receptacles that contained bombs and adjusted them carefully in place. The fliers waited, watching the fog.

It lessened. It tore away in rifts. All around the ships became visible.

Seven battleships swung around and put on speed and rushed in echelon toward the coast. They steered straight for the mouth of Narragansett bay, turned just outside of the zone of fire of its defenses, slowed down and steamed across the mouth.

The biplane's engine burst into life. The machine lifted and followed them. It flew high over them and into the bay, climbing.

"They're over it!" said an officer on a ship, looking at the machine through his glasses.

CHAPTER IX.

The Narragansett Bay Defenders Fall.

FAR inside of the bay, so high in air that it was little more than a shining speck, the aeroplane was describing a series of regular, equal circles. All at once, as if it had been painted in the air with a mammoth brush, a jet black descending streak stood out against the sky and lengthened steadily toward the earth.

The azimuth and other range finding instruments at both ends of the battleships caught the angles and ascertained the range to the black smear that still hung in the air like grease. The aviator had dropped a smoke bomb to indicate the fort below.

The forward turret of a battleship turned. Its hooded rifle lifted its muzzle to an angle of fifteen degrees and spoke with a great voice.

Eleven miles away a ton of steel rushed from the sky, crashed into the water of the bay roaring, ricochetted, struck again half a mile beyond and again and again. Four times it rebounded like a pebble before it disappeared at last, and each time it filled the air with its clamor like a suffering thing. [The latest type of sixteen inch naval gun has a range of 23,000 yards, or eleven and one-half nautical miles, which is a little more than thirteen statute miles. * * * A projectile from a twelve inch rifled gun (U. S. A. coast defense type) which was fired in the presence of the author ricochetted seven times.]

The ship's wireless caught a signal from the aeroplane. The shot had fallen short. The battleship steamed on, and another one in line opened up the mouth of the harbor and fired.

From the aeroplane fell a silver ball. It glittered in the brightening sun, splendid. "Hit!" went the message to the turret, and the crew there embraced and cheered.

It had hit the outer earthworks of the defenses. It had plunged down with a shock that stunned men in mortar pits and gun emplacements far away. Small wonder, for this thing falling from the sky had struck a blow equal to that of New York's obelisk plunging into Broadway from the top of Trinity church steeple!

"No effect!" reported the watchers in the coast defense to the commandant. Though the impact had shaken the works and the very earth, though the blast from the explosion of its charge had twisted three inch iron bars within the works and bent the steel doors of casemates, it had done no harm to the defenses. So well had they been built by the engineers that the rending explosion left a crater for only a moment. The earth rippled down and closed it. The steel and concrete facing underneath held true.

The enemy had the range. Ship after ship passed the entrance, delivered its single shot, proceeded and returned to follow in the circling line. These were the most modern Dreadnoughts, firing from sixteen inch guns. Their shells tore the earth embankments away in tons and flung dirt high in air and sent it down to bury everything in its way under mounds. But all their fire and all their havoc was in vain unless they could hit a gun. And the guns were protected by steel armor and concrete and earth piled on earth.

To hit a gun was to attempt to hit a bullseye only a few feet square at a range of eleven miles, farther than men can see.

Still the bombardment went on, undeterred. More aeroplanes soared over the defenses now, far out of reach from shots, and circled and signaled. The fire grew. The ships were not hesitating now to wear out the rifling of their guns. They meant to give the defenders no rest.

They were trying for a prize that was worth all the guns in their turrets. They knew that inside of the works there could not be more than a few thousand men, if that much. They knew that all the coast artillery forces of the United States combined numbered only 170 companies and that these 170 companies had twenty-seven harbor defense systems to guard. Even if the United States had stripped its other defenses to the utmost, there could not be a sufficient force in these that were now being attacked.

So they poured fire on fire and shot on shot. It was a onesided duel, for their great guns outranged the fourteen inch guns of the defenses. The men in there fired only occasionally, when their observers and range finders and plotters perceived an opportunity. There was another reason for their slow fire besides the inability to reach. Those perfect defenses, those perfect products of engineering science, those results of millions on millions of expenditure, contained only enough ammunition for two hours of firing! [The ammunition now on hand and under manufacture is 73 per cent of the allowance fixed by the national coast defense board. Last report to the chief of staff, U. S. A. * * * "The actual supply of ammunition at present is very considerably behind even that modest standard"—i. e., the minimum allowance—"and in many cases of our most important seacoast guns would be sufficient for only thirty or forty minutes of firing."—Henry L. Stimson, Former Secretary of War, March 1, 1915.]

They waited till the enemy ships should try to force the passage and come within range, that they might make those two hours two hours of unspeakable destruction that should glorify their death with the fiery splendor of bursting ships.

The enemy did not try to force the passage. While they saved their ammunition these defenses were fearful gladiators to approach. None could come within reach of their steel hands and live.

But the gladiators were gladiators fearful only in front. Steel gauntleted, armored with steel breastplates and shinplates, mightily visored—so they faced the sea. In the back they were naked.

Fire and noise and bursting charges and explosions that made hot gales within the works and whirled men like dried leaves! An hour passed. Still from the sea there came the coughing bellow that made the air tremble and rolled inland like summer thunder among hills. Still there fell the screaming steel from the sky. Another hour! And still it came.

The sun was overhead. Suddenly into the naked back of the defenses poured fire and steel that hammered and beat and tore through them. Under it through flame and smoke and flying dirt appeared shining rows of bayonets. With a yelp 10,000 men poured in. [Army and naval officers, both American and foreign, believe that 5,000 men would be more than sufficient to take such works if they are manned only by their coast artillery companies and undefended by a mobile army.]

And through the United States, smiting it into the dumbness of despair, went the news that the great Narragansett defenses had fallen and that the enemy fleet was entering the harbor. America had lost Narragansett bay, with all its defenses, great guns and government stations, in less than two weeks after the declaration of war!

Before the news of Narragansett's fall was an hour old the cities of the United States, including many towns so obscure that few Americans ever had heard their names, had subscribed enough money to raise and equip an army twice over and keep it in the field for months. But the country that was so efficient, so intrepid, so resourceful, was facing a disaster now that it could not conjure away with all the money and men that ever were.

Money, the magician, was futile now. It could not stamp its golden foot and make gun factories and ammunition works spring from the empty ground. It could not send to the army in Connecticut cannon that did not exist or cartridges that had not been made.

An order had gone out from the American headquarters that morning, an ominous warning that, given in battle, would have indicated surely the beginning of the end. It was:

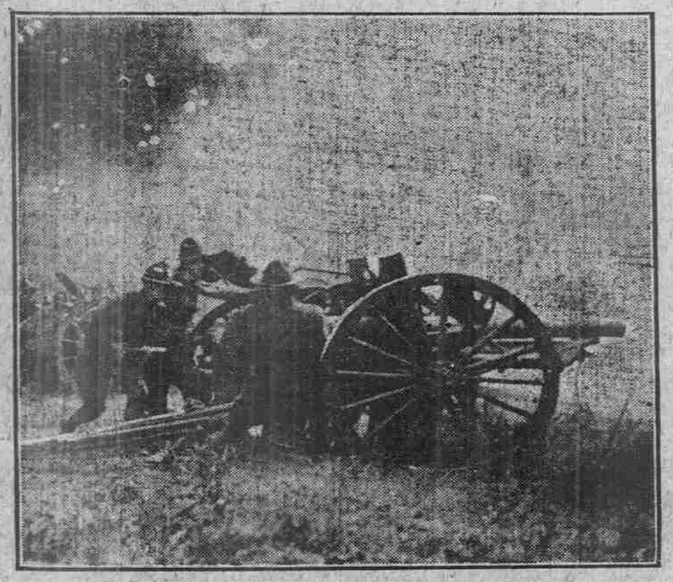
"IT IS OF THE UTMOST IMPORTANCE THAT NO AMMUNITION BE EXPENDED WITHOUT URGENT NEED. COMPANY COMMANDERS WILL ENFORCE THIS ORDER RIGOROUSLY."

While the futile dollars were being flung to the government for new armies the army that was already in the field was counting its small arms and artillery ammunition, knowing that it did not possess enough for two days' battle.

From ocean to ocean men with naked hands were crowding to enlist. The generous nation that never yet had denied a need when the need was made apparent was as generous with its lives as with its dollars. For two and three blocks around the recruiting stations of regular army and militia the streets were packed with men. They had come from work and pleasure. They had come home from far places. They had dropped shovels and tennis rackets, pens and picks. They stood shoulder to shoulder in fine stuffs and in rags, made equal by one loyal purpose. And they were as futile as the dollars.

One million men, it was computed afterward, had offered themselves in America in that one day. But there were no weapons for them. There were not enough rifles. There were no uniforms. There were no tents. There were no shoes.

(To Be Continued.)



THE LAST STAND OF NARRAGANSETT DEFENDERS.

Four homing pigeons flew from New Orleans to Fort Worth, Texas, 579 miles in 14 hours, an average of 41 miles per hour.

Miss Marie L. Wanamaker, daughter of Rodman Wanamaker, was married in Philadelphia to Gurnee Munn, of Washington.

LITTLE BENNY'S NOTEBOOK

By Lee Pape

We was eeting brekfist this moarning, and ma sed to pop, Willyum, I wish youd be nice to my farthir wen he comes heer tonite, he ses the reezon he duzent come awffener is bekause you argew with him awl the time.

Not at awl, its he that argews with me, sed pop, howevvir, I sippose aftir awl it takes 2 to make an argewment and I promise to agree with him in everything tonite, even if I haff to jepperdize my immortil sole by lying about it.

Grandpop calm aftir suppir tonite, and aftir him and pop and ma had been setting tawking a wile, grandpop took a segar out of his vest pocket, saying, O, by the way Willyum, I want you to try this segar and tell me wat you think of it.

Nuthing hard about that, sed pop. And he took the segar and bit the end awf of it, and lit it and took about 2 puffs and made a fearse face.

Dont you like it, sed grandpop.

Willyum, sed ma.

Sure I like it, sure I like it, its an awl rite segar, sed pop. And he took 3 moar big puffs fast, saying, Sure I like it.

You reely think its a fare smoak, heh, sed grandpop.

Sumthing awn that ordir, sed pop. And he took moar puffs and startid to kawff.

Well, if you like it, I dont see eny reezon for awl those fases and awl that kawffing, sed grand pop.

I always make fases and kawff wen I smoak, sed pop.

Wy, sed grandpop.

It adds to the plezzure, sed pop. And he kepp awn smoaking the segar and looking as if he wished he wasent, and aftir a wile grandpop sed, Thats a fackt, is it, you reely like it.

Serteny I like it, sed pop, wat do you wunt me to do, sing a sawng of praise ovir it, wy shoodent I like it.

Bekause I startid wun this aftirnoon and I thawt it was absilootly the werst taisting thing I evvir had in my mouth and I throo it away aftir the ferst puff, sed grandpop.

Heck and blazes, sed pop. And he went to the back setting room window and throo the segar qut so hard it must of went ovir the fents, saying, wy in the naim of common humanity dident you tell me that lawng ago.

But wat was the diffrents as lawng as you liked it, sed grandpop.

Thats rite, Willyum, you kepp insisting that you liked it, sed ma.

Lets change the subjeckt, sed pop.

Wich they did.

Caddies at the Myopia Hunt club, at Hamilton, Mass., struck and members of the club, several of them well-known millionaires, had to carry their own clubs. The caddies won their demand for 75 cents a round.